

U.S. considering airlift for Cambodia

PHNOM PENH—U.S. authorities were reported Thursday to be considering establishment of a "little Berlin airlift" to fly desperately needed fuel supplies to Phnom Penh to ease a crisis caused by Communist blockade of road and river shipments to the Cambodian capital.

Communist stranglehold on Highway 4 to the country's only oil refinery in the southwest cannot be lifted.

The Communists also have been turning back oil barges trying to reach the city up the Mekong River.

The sources said they were "not predicting an American airlift but it is quite possible." They also said they expected "much tighter gas rationing" in the Cambodian capital in coming weeks.

Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, deputy U.S. commander in South Vietnam, flew to Phnom Penh Thursday to confer with Premier Lon Nol, apparently concerning the fuel crisis and the general deterioration in Cambodia's military situation.

U.S. Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, who is to arrive in Saigon Friday, may make the determination as to whether the airlift is necessary in a scheduled meeting with Adm. John S. McCain, U.S. commander in the Pacific.

In 1948 and 1949, after the Soviets blockaded ground traffic to West Berlin, the United States and Britain set up a marathon airlift to supply the isolated city, transporting more than two million tons of food and coal.

Elsewhere in Indochina, U.S. B52 bombers struck the northern corner of South Vietnam for the third time this week in an effort to shut off new Communist supply routes.

To the south, South Vietnamese troops sweeping the U Minh forest, a longtime Viet Cong stronghold in the Mekong Delta, killed 41 Communists, military spokesmen said.

May new date for combat end

WASHINGTON—The U.S. ground combat role in South Vietnam will end with the completion of the current phase of U.S. troop withdrawals May 1, administration officials said Thursday.

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, in Bangkok, Thailand, on a round-the-world inspection trip, said that most U.S. forces "with a combat assignment or a combat responsibility" will have been withdrawn by May 1.

The remaining ground combat troops in Vietnam, he said, would be assigned a security role, protecting themselves and the remaining support forces.

Both Laird and Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim emphasized that U.S. air and artillery forces still would be shooting and being shot at after the "ground combat" phase of the war is over. And Vietnamese units will be to be heavily laced with U.S. advisers.

But there will be no new combat missions initiated in the ground, no new military objectives assigned, and few—if any—patrols sent beyond the base camp perimeters, officials said.

A mild dispute arose over the number of combat personnel that will remain in South Vietnam after the May 1 target

date, when total U.S. troop strength, now 335,000, is expected to be below 284,000.

Friedheim said more than 100,000 combat troops would remain, but other sources said only "a few thousand" would be retained in the security role.

The actual total probably will not be known for some time.

Israel expects Egyptian attack

Israel accused Egypt Thursday of sending four of its Soviet-made Sukhoi 7 supersonic jet fighter-bombers across the Suez Canal in violation of the Middle East cease-fire. An authoritative Israeli military advance warned of a possible attempt by the Egyptians to cross the canal this year with Soviet help.

The accusation and warning came as the United Nations announced that U.N. mediator Gunnar V. Jarring would fly to Jerusalem Thursday from New York for two days of talks with Premier Golda Meir, Foreign Minister Abba Eban and other Israeli leaders. It was his first visit to the Middle East in 20 months.

A U.N. spokesman would give no details except to say Jarring is expected to arrive in the Israeli capital Friday morning and return to New York no later than Sunday night.

The Middle East peace talks were resumed Tuesday after a four-month suspension following Israel's withdrawal in protest against Egyptian violations of the original U.S.-inspired cease-fire agreement last August.

In Jerusalem, an Israeli military spokesman said two pairs of Egypt's Sukhoi 7's flew over Israeli positions on the occupied east bank of the Suez Canal Wednesday in another violation of the Aug. 7 cease-fire. He said a formal complaint was filed Thursday with the

U.N. Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) in Jerusalem.

It was the first Egyptian overflight reported by Israel since last November when it protested against three such violations in two days.

The authoritative military source in Tel Aviv said Israel could not rule out the possibility that Egypt, with the backing of the Soviet Union, would attempt an amphibious crossing of the Suez Canal this year.

Applicant changes mind

WASHINGTON—"I'm asking, begging, even pleading, for an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy," said a student's letter to Sen. Robert W. Packwood, R-Ore.

"I am aware of the many tests and interviews needed that I have missed, and the many others already appointed, but sir in America if you want something bad enough and are willing to work, scratch and toil for it as I am, I hope there is a way."

The young man's grades were not the best, but Packwood was so impressed by the tone of the letter that he sent him a telegram saying he would be nominated for an appointment to West Point.

Back came the reply: "I decline the nomination, Thank you."

Study bares jail conditions

WASHINGTON—The first "accurate" federal census of city and county jail inmates showed that more than half had not been convicted of the charges for which they were being held, the government reported Thursday.

Of the 160,863 persons who were in the nation's local lockups March 15, the date of the headcount, 35 per cent had been arraigned but were awaiting trial and 17 per cent still had not appeared in court at all or were being detained for other authorities.

The total inmate population included 7,800 juveniles.

The study, done by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Justice Department's Law

Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), also found that many city and county jail inmates were being kept in "less than human conditions" for various reasons.

The statistics, made public by Attorney General John N. Mitchell, were gathered as part of a broad study of the nation's jails and provided what was described as the "first accurate measurement of jail population."

Richard W. Velde, LEAA associate administrator, said the full report will be issued later this year "and it will contain detailed information on such critical areas as overcrowding, lack of facilities and age of jails."

The jails surveyed are those which confine inmates 48 hours or more. State facilities and local lockups like drunk tanks were not included.

Velde said preliminary analysis of the census data showed that of the 3,300 jails in cities and counties with over 25,000 residents:

About 85 per cent had no recreational or educational facilities whatsoever;

About 50 per cent had no medical facilities and about 25 per cent were without visiting facilities.

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In anti-Zionist protest

Russians attack diplomat

MOSCOW—Three Russian men stopped an American diplomat outside a Moscow theater, the diplomat said Thursday, grasped him by the lapels while his wife looked on and asked, "How would you like to be treated the way Zionist thugs treat our diplomats in America?"

The Wednesday night street scene marked the first incident of physical harassment suffered by Americans since the Soviets indicate Tuesday there could be reprisals for attacks upon Russians in the United States.

In Washington, State Department spokesman John F. King disclosed that the United States had again rejected a Soviet contention that it might not be able to insure the safety of Americans in Russia.

A steady stream of Soviet citizens delegations entered the U.S. Embassy peacefully to deliver protest letters over the reported abuse of Russians in America. At least five such groups, numbering about 23 persons ranging from factory hands to professors, had visited the embassy by nightfall.

The diplomat, who asked not to be identified, said he talked his way out of the tense situation and parted with a round of handshakes.

He said he and his wife were trying to

enter their car outside Moscow's Taganka Theater, showplace of avant garde productions, when the men came up and identified themselves as "passersby" angered over reports of anti-Soviet hooliganism in America.

"How would you like to be treated the way Zionist thugs treat our diplomats in America?" one asked. "How would you like to have your car destroyed by demonstrators who are not under control?"

"I told them I don't need to listen to you because this was being handled through government channels. I started to get into my car and that's when one of them grabbed me by my lapels, to keep me from getting in," he said.

"It was rather unpleasant at first," he said, "but after we talked awhile things eased. In the end we smiled and shook hands and I left."

Army drug misuse concerns probe head

SAIGON—The chairman of a House Armed Services subcommittee probing drug abuse by American servicemen said Thursday night that the problem, if left unchecked, could "lead to the downfall of America."

Rep. G. Elliot Hagan, D-Ga., and four members of his subcommittee arrived in Saigon Thursday, 24 hours after the U.S. command released a 50-page directive to units outlining steps to check an explosion of drug use by American servicemen in Vietnam.

Hagan said he was "deeply concerned" about the findings in the directive, which said up to 45 per cent of all American servicemen in Vietnam are believed to have used hard drugs or marijuana. It said deaths due to drugs were as much as 70 per cent higher than previously believed.

Hagan said he didn't care what the program cost because "we must find out the extent of this problem. We must take action."

Besides providing an amnesty program for soldiers on drugs, the directive ordered air and ground searches for marijuana fields and ordered barracks searches and baggage and mail inspections.

It also ordered a 15-fold increase in dogs trained to sniff out marijuana.

Hagan said, "I am very impressed with the amnesty program. I'm delighted to see action has been started."

The subcommittee has held hearings on the problem for more than six months.

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